
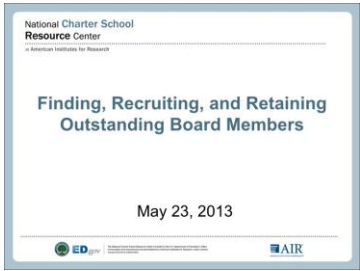
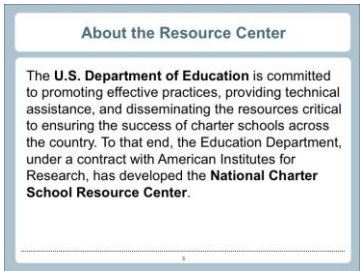


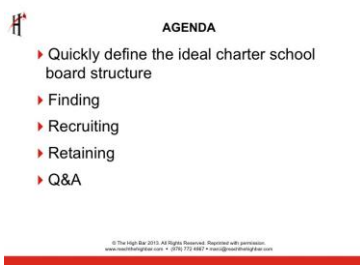





Finding, Recruiting, and Retaining Outstanding Board Members

Part 1

	 <p>Slide 1</p>
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p> <p>Good afternoon. My name is Tammie Knights from the National Charter School Resource Center, and I'm pleased to welcome you to the webinar "Board Governance: Finding, Recruiting, and Retaining Outstanding Charter School Board Members."</p>	 <p>Slide 2</p>
<p>The resource center is funded by the Department of Education's Charter Schools Program and serves as a national center to provide resources, information, and technical assistance to support the successful planning, authorizing, implementation, and sustainability of high-quality charter schools; to share evaluations on the effects of charter schools; and to disseminate information about successful practices in charter schools.</p> <p>I want to quickly remind you about our webinar platform. You can listen to the audio portion either through your computer or over the phone. If you are not prompted to enter your phone number, please dial the number that is listed in the chat. If you have any questions throughout the webinar, please enter them in the chat, and I will collect those and funnel them to our presenter, if she doesn't address them through the presentation.</p>	 <p>Slide 3</p>

<p>I have muted all of the participants because we will be recording the webinar, and we did this so [that] we can ensure audio quality.</p>	
<p>Today, you'll be hearing from Marci Cornell-Feist, [the] founder and chief executive officer of the High Bar. Ms. Cornell-Feist is a nationally recognized expert on charter school governance. She is the author of the <i>Charter School Trustees Guide</i> and of numerous articles, including two issue briefs for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. And with that, I will turn it over to Marci, and we can begin our presentation.</p>	 <p>Slide 4</p>
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Thanks, Tammie. Hi, everybody. This is Marci. Welcome to the webinar. We'll just dive in.</p> <p>Quickly, what we're going to cover—the topic at hand—is finding, recruiting, and retaining trustees.</p>	 <p>Slide 5</p>
<p>First, I want to really define the ideal charter school board structure very quickly and then focus on the finding, and then separate out the recruiting and the retaining and the Q&A. [In] the last webinar we did a few months ago, everybody had so many great questions, and we ran out of time at the end, so I'm going to try and shorten the presentation a little bit and make sure we leave ample time for the questions at the end. I'll try and get through the big topics first. A lot of you submitted great questions in advance, and so I've built those into the presentation and also put some of them at the end, so hopefully we'll hit all your questions, and there will be time for Tammie to field some questions. So let's dive in.</p>	 <p>Slide 6</p>

<p>[First] a little bit of housekeeping. Tammie is recording this, and the recording of the presentation will be available on their website in the middle of next week, I believe. But if you want to access the PowerPoint slides now, you can reach it at this URL here, and then the questions submitted in advance we're going to have at the end.</p> <p>I can see in the notes that some people are having trouble hearing, so, Tammie, do you want me to do something different? Or should I just keep going? [pause]</p>	 <p>HOUSEKEEPING</p> <p>You can find this presentation at:</p> <p>http://pages.reachthehighbar.com/RecruitBoardMembers.html</p> <p>► Questions submitted in advance – will leave ample time at the end of the presentation for questions.</p> <p><small>© The High Bar 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.reachthehighbar.com • (202) 775-6887 • marci@reachthehighbar.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 7</p>
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p>	
<p>I think keep going. I think it's not everybody having trouble. I think just using your teacher voice helps. [laughs]</p>	
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Okay, I will do. I have the mic[rophone] really close to my mouth, so I'll keep going.</p>	
<p>Just very quickly, let's define an effective charter school governing board. It's not a collection of well-meaning people, although most charter school boards really do start out that way. But what you're really trying to build towards, when we think about finding, recruiting, you're trying to build a highly effective team. You really want to think about it as a team that's strategically assembled to bring the skills, expertise, temperament, and the time to govern a multimillion-dollar public enterprise. So that's what you're shooting for. I think when you think about building any kind of team, you want to think about rounding out the skill sets; you're not just looking for one type of person.</p>	 <div data-bbox="1102 1058 1370 1146"> <p>Defining an Effective Charter School Governance Structure: Crash Course</p> </div> <p><small>© The High Bar 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.reachthehighbar.com • (202) 775-6887 • marci@reachthehighbar.com</small></p> <hr/>  <p>Defining the Intent of a Charter School Governing Board</p> <p>► Not a collection of well meaning people</p> <p>Rather.....</p> <p>A highly effective team, strategically assembled to bring the skills, expertise, temperament and time to govern a multi-million dollar public enterprise.</p> <p><small>© The High Bar 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.reachthehighbar.com • (202) 775-6887 • marci@reachthehighbar.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slides 8 and 9</p>

So let's look at board composition. And a few of you did ask questions about this in advance.

I often get the question, "What's the right size for charter school boards?" Unfortunately, it's bigger than you think. I really think that after you launch, even in the founding phase, once you've been chartered, the sooner you can transition to good, active committee work that's happening in-between board meetings, the better off you'll be. You want to use the board meetings for strategic work, and you want to use the committee meetings to dive deeper into things. So the committees that I recommend are governance, meaning a group that looks at the nominating, the finding, and recruiting—what we're going to talk about today—and also looks at the health of the board and looks at when you might need additional training, finance, development, and academic excellence.

We'll do another webinar maybe someday about committees, but you can go to our website, which is <http://www.reachthehighbar.com>, and I have detailed job descriptions there that are free and downloadable—and you can cut and paste from them—that describe each of those committees.

If you have four committees, those are the standing committees that are in your bylaws, and maybe you need some other task force, like personnel or facilities. You want a minimum of three people on a committee and have trustees only serve on one committee because if they serve on multiple committees, then it really leads to burnout. At a minimum, if you have four committees and you have three people on each committee, that's 12 people. That's where I get to the 11–15. So, when you think about finding, and recruiting, and building a pipeline, I think you need to think about [the possibility that] your board might need to be a little bit bigger than you think, so you might need to recruit a few more people than maybe you were currently planning on.



Board Composition

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What's the Right Size for a Charter School Board?

Bigger than you think

- ▶ At least 4 committees: Governance, Finance, Development, Academic Excellence
- ▶ Probably need some other taskforces: Personnel, Facilities, etc.
- ▶ Minimum of 3 people on a committee
- ▶ Trustees only serve on one committee – serving on more than one committee leads to burn out

11-15 is the optimal number

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Slides 10 and 11

I'm going to talk really briefly about some prioritized skills, ideally, finance and more than one. You want some bench strength on finance, facilities—lots of different skills there.

I had a [inaudible] facility. I had to do buildout, financing, and that varies, of course, state to state, how much effort you need to put in there.

Legal: The lawyer on the board should be there—not to be the lawyer for the school—to bring a legal perspective (a legal mind-set) and to tell you when it might be time, you know, before you vote on a policy, hey, we should stop; maybe we should run this by legal counsel. So having one lawyer on the board is good. Having too many lawyers is not good. I've definitely seen boards with too many lawyers; so a couple of lawyers is good.

[Then] HR [human resources] and personnel: Someone who knows how to build good HR policies and deal with thorny HR issues. Schools are all people businesses, and most schools do run into issues around personnel. It's the one skill that I see across the country that very few people actually have on their board, so that's something to look at. I'll talk about how to find these people in a few minutes.

Fundraising: We'll get into fundraising. People asked some good questions about [the] roles and responsibilities of the board around fundraising. But I haven't met too many charter schools that don't need to do some private fundraising; most seem to. So you should think about that.

Education: Even though the business that you're running is an education business, you're going to have or you already have a whole building full of educators—people on your leadership team, classroom teachers—so I think the board skills should complement the staff of the school, not duplicate it. I like really big picture education: people that have run schools before, people who have run an independent school, someone maybe who runs a broader



Slide 12

educational program that might be in sync with your mission, not classroom educators, necessarily, when you want to bring that education skill; that would be duplicating what you have already in the building. And then previous governance experience, for sure, I think is something to look at.

So first think about skills, but start with a balanced set of skills but don't stop there. I think in addition to skills—I think most people say, “Oh, we need a lawyer on the board, or we need someone with HR experience.” The skills are one important screen to look at, but I think you should also think about qualities and then diversity considerations. By qualities, I mean other kinds of things besides a skill, so, obviously, entrepreneurial. Charter schools are real start-ups, and a lot of people are not so comfortable with start-ups. It depends on how young your school is.

You want a sense of humor. If you have a seven-person board and all of them are devil's advocate kind of doubters, you want some cheerleaders. You want some people with a sense of humor. You want to balance up that team.

Everybody, of course, should have a passion for the mission. Time, for sure, is a huge component that you're looking for and good at group process. A lot of what makes a board function is good effective group processes, and not everybody likes group process. Some people like to be the lone wolf or the, you know, person with the red cape that sweeps in and does a big project on their own, and so that's something you can test. I'm going to show you some tools in a minute about how to test for those qualities.

And then the diversity consideration—ethnicity, gender, age, geography, religion, [and] socioeconomic. You're trying to build a diverse team. The more diversity that you have on your team, diversity in the broadest sense, the

Start with Balanced Skill Sets but Don't Stop There

Board Member Qualities	Diversity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial • Sense of humor • Passion for the mission • TIME • Group process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • Gender • Age • Geography • Religion • Socio-economic

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Slide 13

better [the] team you will have assembled that can do group problem-solving together. If everybody is very similar and everybody has same life experiences and thinks the same way, you're not going to be as good at creative problem solving. And in many ways, that's a lot of the work of the board, so skills, and then qualities, and diversity considerations.

The last big thing that I want to say here about the structure, just thinking about the composition, before we move into the [topic of] how you find and recruit folks, is that a real important key to effective governance is a level of objectivity. I think you really need to think strategically about the role of stakeholders on the board.

Now I know we have people on the call—on the webinar—from all over the country, and every state is different. Some states mandate that you have a certain number of teachers on it. Some states I work in actually say it's illegal to have teachers on the board now, so that varies a lot. Some states say that you have to have parents; some say you can't have parents. A lot of discrepancies—so think about and learn about your own state requirements and take what I'm saying and apply it to your own specific context in your state. But my general rule of thumb is you really do want a level of objectivity on the board. You want an arm's length distance. And I think that the role of the stakeholders—parents, teachers, and students—is extremely important. I don't think you can have a successful school without hearing actively from the stakeholders.

But I think hearing from the stakeholders is a management function, so your management team led by your school leader, or your CEO [chief executive officer], or your superintendent—whatever you call it—the head of your school needs to be actively hearing from parents on a regular basis about parent concerns, and then they need to be sharing that information up to the board. They need to be actively engaging the teachers and making sure the




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Slides 14 and 15

<p>teachers are feeling heard and sharing that information with the board and the same with students.</p> <p>Seats on the board: Whether you should have a parent seat on the board, or the teacher seat on the board, or a student rep—to me that’s icing on the cake, and the question is more, “How are we hearing from our stakeholders? What’s the management team’s responsibility?” And make sure that that’s all done very well, and people feel heard, and there’s the right mechanisms there, and then you can address seats on the board.</p> <p>I, personally, prefer not to have stakeholders on the board. I’ve definitely seen parents be very effective board members. It tends to go better having parents on the board if a third or less are parents, direct consumers of the product, a third or less of your board members are parents of kids that are currently in the school. When you recruit parents, you don’t recruit them because they’re parents. You recruit them because they bring those skills and the qualities that you’re looking for.</p> <p>That’s kind of my two cents on that. I’m sure people have more questions. We can talk about that later on.</p>	
<p>Roles and responsibilities: Before you go out and recruit, you really need to have a clear sense of what the job description is for the board. You should have a job description for the full board that says, “When we’re governing, this is our job. This is what we’re on the hook for.”</p> <p>You also need to write out very specific performance expectations for individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do you expect of individual trustees? ▪ What’s the time commitment? ▪ Do they have to give a gift? ▪ Do they serve on a committee? 	 <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 16</p>

Spell that out very clearly. And then, ideally, I think you should have a board member agreement, something that says very specifically, “I’ve read these documents. I’ve read the job description and the performance expectations.” And trustees sign their name and say that they’re committed to doing that.

And just in the essence of time—because this isn’t really the topic of the webinar today—you can find examples of these in the free resources section of our website there, which is <http://www.reachthehighbar.com>.

So let’s shift to talk about [the following:] “How do we find these great candidates?” My first kind of tip for you that I’ve just learned from working with—I have worked with hundreds and hundreds of boards across the country for 16 years—is that we all jump to the candidates. “Oh, we need an accountant on the board. Oh, my brother-in-law’s an accountant. I’ll ask him who he knows”—that kind of thing.

I think first you need to think about referral sources, people that can refer you to the right candidates because often we just have a pretty tight-knit group on the board, and you kind of exhaust your own inner circle, and so you want to think about referral sources that can bring you out of the kind of typical circle of people that you’re mining to find trustees.

A referral source is someone who is too close to you or the school to be effective on the board, so maybe your brother-in-law is a CPA [certified public accountant]. He wouldn’t be good on the board because it would be too close of a connection—he’s your brother-in-law—but he might know other people who are CPAs.

People who are great connectors or also people that you know who are too busy for your board but [who’d] like to help. In every town, small community, big city, there are these people that are just—you know—the names in your



How Do We Find Great Candidates?

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FINDING CANDIDATES

TIPS



- ▶ Board Candidates vs. Referral Sources

Examples:

- ▶ People too close to you or the school to be effective on the board
- ▶ Great connectors
- ▶ People that you know are too busy for your board but would like to help

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Slides 17 and 18

<p>town. They are the people that are serving on all kinds of boards already, and so chances are they might be too busy for you, but if they're serving on a lot of boards, they understand what that means, and they probably are really good connectors, and they can lead you to other people.</p>	
<p>Some examples of referral sources are local politicians who might be supportive of your mission [and] an executive director of a local nonprofit you admire. I think in every community, there are nonprofits that are serving the same target audience that you are, so connecting with them. They often are looking for candidates, so you might have a good board member whose term limits are up, and they're rotating off your board. And you could refer them to the executive director of the Y or whatever the organization is, and they may have people in a similar situation that they could refer to you.</p> <p>I've had very good luck across the country with local college and university presidents—community college presidents particularly. They just seem to be good connectors and just—you know—out in the community and know people and can refer people to you or alumni.</p> <p>Chair of the local chamber of commerce: Sometimes the chamber is supportive of the charter; sometimes they're not. But if they are, it's a good place to start. So those are examples of referral sources.</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 468 1409 714">  FINDING CANDIDATES Examples of referral sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local politicians who are supportive of your mission ▶ ED of a local nonprofit that you admire ▶ Local college and university presidents ▶ Chair of the local chamber of commerce board ▶ Anyone who is a great connector! <small>© The High Road 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.nationalhighroad.com • (202) 775-4887 • info@nationalhighroad.com</small> </div> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 19</p>
<p>I have had some luck advertising, doing public speaking, thinking about an ambassador role, and I think these are good. Many local United Ways have board banks. In the early days, they weren't so interested in having charters be part of those board banks. They usually have a board fair once or twice a year, where you can get a booth, and people who are interested in volunteering on boards actually show up. But more and more, the United Ways, I think, are coming around and see charters as a fit and all that. It depends on your locale, but I've had good luck there.</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 1444 1409 1690">  FINDING CANDIDATES Advertise. Public Speaking. Ambassador Role. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local United Way Banks ▶ Affinity groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hispanic MBAs – Bar Association's African American Lawyers Group – Local chapter of Association of Fundraising Professionals <small>© The High Road 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.nationalhighroad.com • (202) 775-4887 • info@nationalhighroad.com</small> </div> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 20</p>

And I've had really good luck with affinity groups: The National Hispanic MBAs group [[National Society of Hispanic MBAs](#)] has local chapters all over the place, [and] you'd be amazed where. The [[National Bar Association](#)] has just every kind of affinity group: African American Lawyers Group or Women African American Lawyers—all different kinds—lawyers that specialize in education or various things, so those affinity groups. I've had okay luck; it depends on the state and the locale, but there's the [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#). So those are just ideas.

Some of the ways to reach out to them could be asking if you could put a blurb in their newsletter. You could ask to speak at a luncheon. Sometimes, they'll let you just pitch your school. Often, people are just curious about every forum and whether you realize it or not, if you serve on a charter school board, you're probably more of an ED [education] reform expert than you realize. A lot of people just don't understand what a charter is, and how many charters there are in the state or in the city, and what makes a good charter. And so, often, I've had good luck having board members or the school leader go and talk broadly about every forum and then particularly about their school, and then at the end talking about the need to find other board members, so it's another way to find candidates.

I get asked a lot what about cold calling. And every year, we do have clients that have amazing luck with finding incredible people just through cold calling persistence. And it's like anything. You have to be good at screening, and you have to be willing to take a lot of rejection.

If you want to do cold calling, some of my tips are...really focus on what are the skill sets you need. You could target the small, midsize, large corporations in your area, maybe the head of HR. Often the head of HR is the one who is charge of community service for the corporation, and so it may be a good place to find people. You could target the



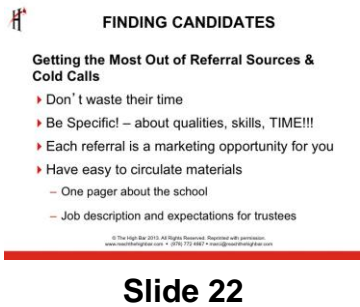
FINDING CANDIDATES

Cold Call?

- ▶ Target areas of expertise at local corporations
 - Head of HR, Marketing, Finance, PR
- ▶ Law firms and accounting firms
- ▶ Closest office of big management consulting firms
 - Bain, McKinsey, etc.

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Slide 21

<p>marketing department, the finance, [and] PR [public relations].</p> <p>I've had pretty good luck with law firms. Often, people in law firms have to do some level of community service. I have a number of boards that I work with that have someone junior come and take the minutes, and then just be another set of eyes and ears in the meeting, which can be helpful.</p> <p>I've also had luck with accounting firms. And then, depending on if you're in a city, I have good luck with Bain and McKinsey. Often, they have younger folks that are interested in getting board service, and they're very good at looking at data and asking good questions—some of the skill sets that we need board members to have. So those are some tips about finding candidates.</p>	
<p>I think the other piece is to make sure you get the most of the referral sources and cold calls, so definitely don't waste time. The more specific you can be about the qualities and skills, and the fact that you need people who can actually spare the time is important. Remember that each referral source is a marketing opportunity for you. I've had tons of people tell me how they cold called or were trying to find board candidates, and that didn't happen, but it led to a corporate sponsorship of an event, or it led to a donation of something to benefit the school. You just never know what's going to happen, so just treat it as a marketing opportunity.</p> <p>The more you can be specific and have those job descriptions and attached, chances are you're going to call someone, or cold e-mail someone, or reach out to a referral source, and they're going to want to quickly pass you along to somebody else. So the more you can give them materials so they're telling the story—you know—they can forward on an e-mail with—here's the one page job description about what this group is looking for—the more likely you'll get what you need out of those reach outs. So, that's some thoughts about finding candidates.</p>	 <p>FINDING CANDIDATES</p> <p>Getting the Most Out of Referral Sources & Cold Calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Don't waste their time ▶ Be Specific! – about qualities, skills, TIME!!! ▶ Each referral is a marketing opportunity for you ▶ Have easy to circulate materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One pager about the school – Job description and expectations for trustees <hr/> <p>Slide 22</p>

Screening candidates: Once you find them; that's the first big step. But the devil is definitely in the detail about screening candidates.

I have seven steps. I'm going to walk you through them and just show you them, and then I'll go into each one in more depth.

1. You need to make sure you have all the tools in place before you actually start the process.
2. You have to have the full board agree on your priorities, and I'll talk about that in a minute.
3. [You need a] great attitude.
4. [You need] a low-stakes screen; you want to make sure it's low stakes. Give yourself plenty of outs, in case the person isn't a fit.
5. I would have them visit the school...
6. Attend a board meeting and/or a committee meeting...
7. [before I] decide to nominate.

So those are the seven steps. Let me take you through those in detail.

Step number one: the tools you need in place, [the] job description, like I said. I would have a sample nominating policy and process. I would have someone write that out, and I would get it approved by the full board, and then a set of interview questions—I'm going to show you some of the examples of these in a minute—and then clarify the roles and responsibilities in the recruitment.

- What's your school leader going to do?
- What's the committee going to do?
- What's the full board going to do?

Ideally, you have a committee, usually a governance committee, that is responsible for drafting the job



How Do We Screen Candidates?

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7 STEPS FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES

- Step #1: Tools You Need In Place
- Step #2: Full Board Agree on Priorities
- Step #3: The Right Attitude
- Step #4: Low Stakes Screen
- Step #5: Visit to the School
- Step #6: Attend a Board Meeting and/or Committee Meeting
- Step #7: Decide to Nominate

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Slides 23 and 24




SCREENING CANDIDATES



Step #1: Tools You Need In Place


- ▶ Job Description
- ▶ Nominating Policy and Process
- ▶ Interview Questions
- ▶ Ranking Sheet
- ▶ Clarify Roles & Responsibilities in Trustee Recruitment Process
- School Leader, Committee, Full Board

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Slide 25

<p>description, drafting the nominating policy, drafting the interview questions, and then you would share that with the full board and get the whole board to buy in and sign off before you went out and did stuff.</p> <p>I think the school leader should have a huge role in this. I wouldn't give the school leader, like, full veto power, but I would want the candidates to meet your leader and be really inspired by your leader and feel like they click with your leader. I would definitely want the leader to be involved in setting the priorities and being involved in the screening process. I found that many school leaders—it depends on the time of year—but most school leaders that I work with are very actively screening and recruiting candidates to teach in the school all the time, and they just are in that screening mode, and they tend to get, over time, very, very good at kind of assessing out how people are going to fit with the organization. I think that really applies to the screening of candidates as well because much of the screening of candidates should really mirror and kind of feel a little bit like a full kind of job interview.</p>	
<p>Let me show you a few of the tools.</p> <p>Interview questions: I think that people make the mistake of only asking questions around skills and expertise; I think this is where we're most comfortable. I give you a few samples here. You could ask people [the following:]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What ideas do you...are they comfortable leveraging their networks and their connections to benefit the school? ▪ Do they have some past issues—real or perceived—conflicts of interest that maybe could interfere with their service on the board? <p>You could talk to them about previous governance experience. For example, if you want to see how comfortable they are with fundraising, you could ask them to describe a project that you raised money for in the past.</p>	<div data-bbox="1047 1140 1408 1386">  SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions Ask questions in 4 distinct areas ► Skills and Expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What ideas do you have to leverage your networks and connections that could benefit the school? – Do you have any past issues or real or perceived conflicts of interest that could potential interfere with your service on the board? – What is your past governance experience? What worked and didn't work about that board? How effective was your service? Why? – Describe a project that you raised money for in the past. What were your goals and what was the outcome? <small>© The Lehigh Valley 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.lehighvalleycharter.org • 717.751.4447 • hsa@lehighvalleycharter.org</small> </div> <hr style="border: 2px solid red;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 26</p>

<p>And then, of course, all the regular questions people ask when they're used to looking at it—you get a résumé from your candidate—and you just ask them about, you know, their work life and things like that.</p>	
<p>So I think you have to ask them [questions from] these four [areas]. Area number one is skills and expertise. Most people are comfortable with that. [But] most people leave out the next three categories.</p> <p>I would definitely ask a whole lot of questions about teamwork and group participation. These are just sample questions, so how you would test for that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you're in a professional group, do you often change your mind on issues about what you feel strongly? ▪ Can you think of any examples when you changed your mind or when you didn't? ▪ Describe an experience in which you had leadership responsibilities with a group. What worked? What did you learn about yourself? ▪ Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with the team member, an employee, or a manager. What strategies did you use to resolve the conflict? <p>You'd be amazed at just pushing a little bit on the teamwork and group participation, you can really kind of flush out some things that you wouldn't have known if you were just asking about skills and expertise. So I would think about that—some questions on that topic.</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 424 1409 667">  SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions Ask questions in 4 distinct areas » Teamwork and Group Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you are in a professional group, do you often change your mind on issues about which you feel strongly? Can you think of any examples when this did or didn't happen? - Describe an experience in which you had leadership responsibilities with a group. What worked? What did you learn about yourself? - Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with a team member, employee, or manager. What strategies did you use to resolve the conflict? <small>© The High Five 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.screeningtools.com • 2025 775-4887 • info@screeningtools.com</small> </div> <hr style="border: 2px solid red; margin: 10px 0;"/> <div data-bbox="1166 688 1295 730" style="text-align: center;"> Slide 27 </div>
<p>The third area is time and energy. You want to make sure that you really probe if they have time to serve on the board. I think we often feel like we have to beg and plead and cajole people to serve on the board, even if they're super busy. And I think you just want to know upfront, are they going to make time? Is this going to be a priority? Because otherwise you'll get them on the board, and they</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 1591 1409 1835">  SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions Ask questions in 4 distinct areas » Time and Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What projects are you passionately committed to right now? - Do you have any other non-profit commitments that might be a higher priority to you than your service on our school board? If so, what are they? - How many board positions do you currently hold? What conflicts could your service to this board present? <small>© The High Five 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.screeningtools.com • 2025 775-4887 • info@screeningtools.com</small> </div> <hr style="border: 2px solid red; margin: 10px 0;"/> <div data-bbox="1166 1856 1295 1898" style="text-align: center;"> Slide 28 </div>

<p>won't follow through, and it'll become frustrating for everybody.</p> <p>Some questions you could ask around time and energy are [as follows]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What projects are you passionately committed to right now? Because you might find out they're really into six other really cool projects, and it might make you think, hmm, I'm not really sure this is going to be a fit. ▪ Do you have any other nonprofit commitments that might be a higher priority to you than this service on the board, and, if so, what are they? You can better evaluate and be honest with them about whether this is going to be a fit for them time wise. ▪ How many board positions do you currently hold? ▪ What conflicts could your service to this board present? <p>I would ask some things around that.</p>	
<p>And then the last category, which is often the most important and a little bit tricky for people, but I would definitely test for philosophical alignment. I've seen tons and tons of board members, just great board members but on the wrong board—someone who passionately believes in really progressive education on a very back-to-basics kind of board, or vice versa.</p> <p>You really want to make sure that your mission and what you're pushing are things that can really align with your school because if not, you're just going to be butting heads all the time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ So, philosophical alignment: Where do your children go to school? Are you satisfied? Why or why not? You'll find out really interesting things if you ask that. ▪ Do you think public schools should be in the 	<p> SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions</p> <p>Ask questions in 4 distinct areas</p> <p>» Philosophical Alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Where do your children go to school? Are you satisfied, why or why not? – Do you think public schools should be in the business of teaching character and civic education? – Describe your vision of an excellent public school? – Tell me about an experience or achievement from your own schooling that was particularly powerful for you? <p><small>© The High Star 2015. All Rights Reserved. Permission to reproduce: www.nationalcharter.org • (202) 775-4827 • info@nationalcharter.org</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 29</p>

<p>business of teaching character and civic education, you know, depending on your model?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe your vision of an excellent public school. ▪ Tell me about an experience or an achievement from your own schooling that was particularly powerful. <p>I think you'll get really interesting responses, and it'll help you say, "Oh, yeah, I can see how they're going to relate or understand our mission." Does that make sense?</p> <p>So I would ask about those four questions and then come up with questions in each of those four categories. And to the extent possible, I'd try and ask everybody the same questions so that you can really do an apples-to-apples comparison. I also think it's important—you will inevitably find people who want to serve on the board that you don't think are a fit, and so you want to make sure there was a fair and equal process and that everybody's going through a similar process that you've documented.</p>	
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Then I like to use a ranking sheet. This is just an example of an evaluation form because, ideally, you might have two, or three, or even four people out screening candidates and then you want to bring back their experiences with interviewing them and try and do an apples-to-apples comparison. This ranking sheet helps you quantify it a little bit.

You can see here I'm asking about the relative experience and rating on a scale of one to five. Definitely invite is five, and one is definitely reject. And then teamwork, you know, asking those questions and how did they relate on teamwork. How did they relate on the commitment and then philosophical alignment.

Ideally, they'd get a score out of 20. And you may have a policy that, you know, if someone gets—and you wouldn't invite anybody on who scores below a certain [score], like below a 15 or, you know, a 13 or something like that.

SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet
Board Candidate Evaluation Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____
Evaluator Name: _____

1. Relevant Expertise:
Does the candidate have expertise relevant to a board position? Will his or her expertise fill a need pointed to current board members? Has the candidate had enough experience within his/her field such that she can make meaningful contributions? Is the candidate willing to share his or her expertise as a board member?

Please check only the TWO most relevant areas of expertise:

<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Governance
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior management/leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities/Real Estate
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/Finance Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal	<input type="checkbox"/> Public/Community Connections
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/PR	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Representation/Organizing

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

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SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet

2. Teamwork:
Will the candidate make a good team member? Is the candidate open to hearing others' opinions and perspectives? Sensitive to group dynamics? Willing to put organizational needs before his or her interests and needs in making decisions?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

3. Commitment:
Is the candidate willing to devote her/his full energy and talent to the board? Is the candidate's understanding of his or her responsibilities as a board member aligned with our expectations? Does he or she have the time necessary to be an active board member? Even in the face of organizational challenges and difficulties, will the candidate remain committed to the organization?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

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SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet

4. Philosophical Alignment:
Does the candidate believe in the mission and purpose of both our organization and the charter school movement? Will the candidate make decisions based on alignment with the organizational mission, rather than based on personal needs and considerations?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL SCORE (out of 20): _____

Overall Impressions: _____

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Part 2

So that is the idea about the interview questions and then the ranking tool.

You definitely should have the full board agree on the recruitment priorities before you go out. We have three openings. What are the prioritized skills we need? Some people may think all three positions should be filled with fundraising—people with fundraising capabilities. And others may say no. We need someone with facility, and someone with finance, and someone with fundraising. You want to talk about that and have the governance committee make a recommendation but then come back to the board and let the whole board weigh in.

The same with qualities or diversity. You want to talk about those and make sure that the people who are out


SCREENING CANDIDATES

Step #2: Full Board Agreement on Recruitment Priorities

- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Qualities
- ▶ Diversity

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Slide 33


<p>recruiting have a really good slate. Just like when you were going to fill a position—you know—at work. If you have an ideal candidate in mind or a series of positions you're filling, you want to think about that so you can better come up with a match.</p>	
<p>The next step is the right attitude. You definitely want to be screening, not begging. I think you should really have this attitude that it's an honor and a privilege to serve on your board, and not everybody gets to do it. I think the more you position it that way—even though internally you may feel like oh, just begging them; I really, really hope this person will come on—I think that does a disservice to your school and your board.</p> <p>Don't just sell. I think we tend to just talk all about the school, and there's all these exciting things, and we're really trying to cheerlead and entice them. But I think you also really need to stop and listen and make sure that they're a good fit, especially for time and for the mission.</p> <p>I know we had a few questions about people who aren't a fit. So definitely give yourself an out. I wouldn't start with we're looking for board members. I would say we're looking for volunteers. We're looking for committee members, and we're looking for board members, and just set the tone. If you just say we're screening people for board candidates, it sets the expectation that's a yes or no answer. If you say that, you're casting a broad net. You may find someone that has great skills but maybe personality, or time, or other things means they're not going to be a good fit. [But] they can definitely be a volunteer and focus on a particular project.</p> <p>There's a board I'm working with now that recently found someone who actually has really amazing Web development skills, [but] it turned out in the interviewing process that they're changing jobs, they're having a second child, they're very, very busy and serve on three nonprofit boards. It was just clear to me, as much as the</p>	<div data-bbox="1047 457 1404 766">  <p>SCREENING CANDIDATES</p> <p>Step #3: The Right Attitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Screening not begging ▶ It is an honor & a privilege to serve ▶ Don't just sell – listen – make sure they are a fit – especially for <u>time</u> and <u>mission</u> ▶ Give yourself an out "we're looking for volunteers, committee members and board members." ▶ Clear, transparent process <p><small>© The Hope Lab 2015. All Rights Reserved. Permission to reproduce: www.screeninglab.com • (877) 773-4827 • info@screeninglab.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 34</p> </div>

board would like this person to join them, that she wasn't going to be a good fit for the full board membership. But they approached her about being a volunteer and really helping them improve a lot of their Web capabilities, or website, and some other things they're doing. And she's just going to work as a volunteer on a special project. I think that'll be better for the board and better for her at this time, and, who knows, maybe her time will get freed up, and she can join the board at another time.

I also really highly recommend that you try people out on committees, and so have nonboard members as committee members. I think that you can try them out that way. It's fair for them to get an experience about what serving on the charter school board would be and whether they can handle the workload; there's usually less workload on a committee. Some people are really happy just serving on committees in perpetuity. Maybe they don't have the time for the full board or they don't want the whole responsibility. I don't think it's just a given that everybody would want to work on the...just serve on the board.





I mentioned having this clear and transparent process—that written policy and process and steps—and then making sure you follow through with fidelity to that, so someone can't say that you're treating different candidates differently. So, that's step three.

Step four is the low-stakes screen; come up with a set of questions, like I showed you. Come up with questions that probe about skills and expertise, teamwork and group participation, time and energy, and then philosophical alignment.

- 
- SCREENING CANDIDATES**
- STEP #4: Low Stakes Screen**
- ▶ Come with a set of questions
 - ▶ Test for:
 - Skills and Expertise
 - Teamwork and Group Participation
 - Time and Energy
 - Philosophical Alignment

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<p>Definitely have people visit the school. If they can't get in their car or take public transportation and come to your school and actually tour it, I definitely wouldn't nominate them to the board. Have them meet some additional trustees and definitely meet your CEO and get a few other peoples' vibe check on them. When they visit the school, you can retest and ask them new or different questions around those same categories, just to get another read. And then definitely have the people who meet the candidates complete their ranking sheet to try and make it quantifiable and compare your notes.</p>	 <p>SCREENING CANDIDATES</p> <p>STEP #5: Visit to the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trustees and CEO Meet ▶ Test on same 4 categories of questions ▶ Everyone complete a ranking sheet – try to make it quantifiable <p><small>© The High Rise 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.researchinggreat.com • (202) 775-4887 • nancy@researchinggreat.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 36</p>
<p>As far as step six, I would have them attend a board meeting and/or committee meeting. In fairness to the candidate, you should let them get a sense of what the work will be like. Let them see the board in action. Let them sit through a board meeting and tell you whether—you know—they think they can contribute or not.</p>	 <p>SCREENING CANDIDATES</p> <p>STEP #6: Attend a Board Meeting and/or Committee Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In fairness to the candidate, let them get a full sense of what the work will be like <p><small>© The High Rise 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.researchinggreat.com • (202) 775-4887 • nancy@researchinggreat.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 37</p>
<p>And then decide whether to nominate. I already mentioned think about trying everyone on a committee first and then think about appropriate ways to say thanks but no thanks.</p>	 <p>SCREENING CANDIDATES</p> <p>STEP #7: Decide to Nominate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Think about trying everyone on a committee first ▶ Think about appropriate ways to say "thanks, but no thanks." <p><small>© The High Rise 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.researchinggreat.com • (202) 775-4887 • nancy@researchinggreat.com</small></p> <hr/> <p>Slide 38</p>
<p>The last bit here is about retaining trustees, and then we'll move onto some of the [questions]—I can see folks are asking a lot of questions.</p> <p>So a few pointers here about retaining trustees, and the first is board meetings. If you get great candidates, but you run really lousy board meetings—board meetings that go on and on and on—and they take four hours when you really could streamline them and take two; when you want your board meetings to be strategic rather than reactive; and if all you do in the board meetings is repeat things that happened in the past or read out reports that were circulated in advance, then people's attention/attendance</p>	 <p>How Do We Retain Great Trustees?</p> <p><small>© The High Rise 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.researchinggreat.com • (202) 775-4887 • nancy@researchinggreat.com</small></p> <hr/>

at the meeting will wane. You want to make the meetings about the future, not reporting on the past. You don't want to read out reports; you want to really dive in, and roll up your sleeves, and talk about the key strategic issues. You want the reports to give everybody background—a jumping off point.

You've got to have excellent facilitation. If you come up with a really tight agenda, you want to stick to it. If you say something's going to take 15 minutes, you want to really hold to that and run really efficient meetings.

I would definitely do a thorough orientation for folks. I think often people put all this effort into finding the great candidates, and then they just dump them on the board, and then they're sort of lost, especially if you have a tight-knit founding group and you're trying to add to it. They often just look around, and they don't understand what's going on, and, often, they rotate off.

Two questions that were submitted in advance here are [as follows:]

- “What should the board induction process look like?”
- “How much information at once, and how to make sure they clearly understand the role of the board?”

I recommend a variety of things. I mean, you definitely want to give them a copy of your charter and the minutes and agendas from the last year and have someone walk them through that, and maybe have them spend time at the school. A lot of the boards that I work with actually do an orientation/refresher for the whole board once a year, so as they add new people, I think, you could do a refresher on the open meeting law and some various things that people need guidance with.

This is a good question. “Is there an ideal calendar to adopt in terms of when to add or orient new board



BOARD MEETINGS

- ▶ No more than 2 hours long
- ▶ Strategic rather than reactive
- ▶ Excellent facilitation
- ▶ Always sticks to an agenda

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Slides 39 and 40



Thorough Orientation

- ▶ Make sure to provide a clear orientation to the school, the charter, and the history and the vision of the organization.
- ▶ What should board induction processes look like? How much info at once, and how to make sure they clearly understand the role of the board?
- ▶ Is there an ideal calendar to adopt, in terms of when to add/orient new board members, and when terms of board members begin/end?

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members and when terms of board members begin and end?” I think, ideally, I like having the annual meeting around now, so May or June, so you end the school year by nominating new trustees and selecting your officers and your committee chairs so that then you already know who is on the team and who is in the leadership positions. You can use July and August for good strategic planning for the year, and then when doors open at the end of August—or some of you probably open in early August—you can kind of hit the ground running.

A lot of people have their annual meetings in the fall, like at back to school time, but I find if you have your annual meeting and elect your new trustees in September/October, then you’re doing your planning in November and December, and then all of a sudden a big chunk of the school year is gone. I like to have the transition around now, so people can use the summer to get more up to speed.

A few tips about board meetings: I think I said this in the last webinar if some of you were there. But I like every single agenda item to tie to a key annual goal of the school. The agenda format that we use in our board-on-track platform, when you put in an agenda item, you link it to an annual goal, so you can track how much of the board meeting time is actually spent on the strategic issues, rather than things that are not strategic. I would definitely use a timekeeper, stopwatch, if you need it, in addition to the chair, if you’re having trouble staying on topic, on agenda, and under a two-hour time limit. You should try making someone else the timekeeper. It’s very hard to be the group facilitator and the timekeeper often, so the chair could probably use some help around that.

I always do a very quick evaluation at the end of the board meeting—plus, minus, delta:

- **Plus.** What was good about the meeting?
- **Minus.** What was bad about the meeting?
- **Delta,** What would change about the meeting?



BOARD MEETINGS

TIPS

- ▶ Every agenda item linked to an annual goal
- ▶ Use a timekeeper & stopwatch in addition to chair
- ▶ Evaluate the board meeting

+
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▲

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I would just have the chair or the chair to the governance committee just go around the room and point to each person and just ask them to weigh in—plus, minus, [and] delta. Because in reality you all go out in the parking lot and actually have that conversation anyway, and if you would sit in a room and actually just take two minutes and go through that, you will learn from it, and you'll improve things.

Last couple of things here: strategic not reactive. Some of you may have seen this, but this is something that we use a lot at the High Bar. But if you start at the bottom of that chart, when you're a one-year-old school, ideally 20 percent of your time is spent on creating the future, so not what's happening this month or what happened in the past but future things. And 80 percent is probably reacting to stuff that is happening now. But as the school gets older, and this is somewhat aspirational, I know, but ideally by the time you're five years old, 90 percent of the board's time should be talking about next year. If you have five years of budgets to actuals, if you have five years of teacher retention and student retention data, you should be able to start shifting the board to really focus on the longer-term goals of the school, not just the reacting to what's being thrown on the board table that month.

As you shift in trying to recruit more board members, the more strategic the work is of the board, the more you're going to be able to attract and retain high-caliber trustees.

A few other tips I like for retaining. I find that a lot of board members just walk around feeling guilty, like I should probably do a lot more. I served on a board of a small museum and came up with this. The board chair recruited me to chair the governance committee, and I asked him why, what he wanted me to do as the chair of the governance committee. And he said I just want them to all stop feeling guilty. I run into them in the supermarket, and our board members just, like, turn the other way when they see me because they all feel guilty that they're not doing



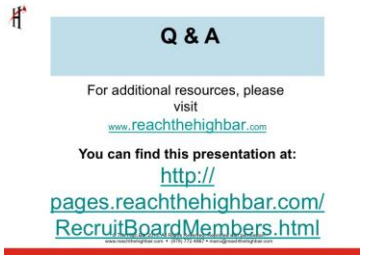
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 **Guilt Free Board Member Card**

Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend 10 board meetings & annual board retreat
Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give personal gift to best of your ability Find 3 items for the auction
Ambassador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring 6 guests to breakfast tours Host a "learn about charters" event at your workplace
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively serve on one committee

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<p>something. And most of our trustees actually were doing a lot.</p> <p>This guilt-free board member card: We develop it once a year, and I think good board members are governors, sponsors, ambassadors, and consultants. The good boards that I work with—the effective boards—do all four of those things all the time or most of the time. So you really spell out [that] the governor attends these 10 board meetings and [the] annual board retreat, and usually I would put the dates in there. Sponsors give a personal gift, find three items for the auction—whatever. You can customize these for each trustee. An ambassador role might be bringing people to a breakfast tour or host[ing] a “learn about charters” event at your workplace. A consultant serving on the committee. You can customize these, but that’s an example. It just helps people, helps you retain people. It gives them something kind of tangible that, “Oh, if I do these things, I can be guilt free. I’ll be doing a good job as a trustee.”</p>	
<p>So let’s shift to some of the questions I think Tammie’s been collecting. And, again, Tammie is going to post the recording of the webinar on the Resource Center webpage the middle of next week, and if you want the presentation, not the recording but the PowerPoint slides right away, you can get them there at this link.</p> <p>Tammie, do you want to give me some questions? And I also have some of the questions that people submitted in advance.</p>	 <p>Slide 45</p>
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p>	
<p>Yes, absolutely. One question was just your recommendation about having nonboard members serve on committees.</p>	
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Yes.</p>	

TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
[I'm] just wondering what your thoughts are on that and how you've seen that work.	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah. I think I mentioned that, but maybe I said it very quickly. I think it's an extremely effective technique. In fact, a large number of the boards that I consult with that are High Bar members actually have that as policy. Many of them have it as a policy that you have to serve on a committee for six months or a year before you get nominated to the full board. It's just in fairness to the candidate.</p> <p>If I have strong financial skills, I'm probably going to do better starting on the finance committee—that's my area of comfort. Like, I don't want to understand about AYP [adequate yearly progress], and state test scores, and disaggregated data, and regression models, and all that stuff; the alphabet soup of academics gets a little scary. But I know spreadsheets, so I can help on the finance committee. I'll get comfortable, and then you can teach me some of these other parts of a school.</p> <p>So on fairness to the candidate, it often works better to start them in their comfort zone on a committee. And then in fairness to you, you can definitely figure out if people have time. If they can't show up to a committee meeting or if they come to the committee meeting and they're not helpful or they dominate the conversation, you definitely don't want to nominate them. You can find out if people really have the time through this process—having them be nonboard members on a committee first. And you can also find out if they have a personal agenda.</p> <p>Someone asked just now, "Do nonboard members on committees create issues with transparency laws, like the Brown Act?" No. I mean if you have a quorum—each state open meeting law is different. I'm not going to weigh in on the Brown Act because we have people from all over the</p>	

<p>country. But the open meeting laws require, in many places, [that] the committees do have to meet publicly. Sometimes they don't. But if you have a quorum of the board or [a] simple majority, you have to meet in public. The nonboard members don't count towards that. There's no violation there.</p> <p>Tammie, do you want me to take some of the presubmitted questions? Or do you want to pass along some more to me? Either way...</p>	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>Yes. Let me pass along another one. You talked a little bit about having multiple options for prospective people looking to join a school structure, but [do you have] just any suggestions on how to just reject someone outright if they aren't a good fit or for whatever reason?</p>	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah; I think it's important. Each state is a little bit different. I know a handful of people in a handful of states that were involved in writing the specific charter laws. In most places, when the laws were created—you can go ask your state association or someone you know who was involved where your law got passed—there was healthy debate about should we call them school boards or school committees because school committees and school boards are elected through...it's a popularity contest or it's a public election. In many places, there was healthy debate, and they chose calling it a board of trustees or a board of directors because an essential part of that was that nonprofit boards that are board of trustees, board of directors, or even corporate boards get to self-perpetuate. They actually get to pick who is on the team. A lot of people that wrote the original laws thought that was important, and I think that's hugely important. I said in my definition that it's about strategically assembling a team. I think [that] what I would do in those cases is—it can be difficult, but you're going to be really glad. Sometimes it's just better to just do the difficult conversation early on,</p>	

<p>rather than get them on the board. Once they're on the board, it's very hard to remove people.</p> <p>I like to just say, you know, we're running a multimillion-dollar business. We're a \$5.7 million charter school operation, and we're strategically selecting. We only have two slots, and we really have to round out our team with people with the skills to help us run this multimillion-dollar business. Right now, we need these two skills, and you don't have those, or they might have redundant skills. So that's what I would do. Hopefully that starts to answer the question—it's a thorny one.</p>	
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p>	
<p>Another question came in just about being strategic about selecting the board members and specifically about philosophical alignment. "[Are] there any legal things to consider when you're asking potential board members about their children or where they go to school? Are there any questions that could get people in trouble legally?"</p>	
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Yeah; that's a good question. I mean, I think my point was don't just ask them about the stuff on their résumé. If you are on a board of...if you're recruiting someone for a board of an urban gap-closing school whose mission is to get all your kids into and to succeed in college, you absolutely have to ask people if they believe your kids can do it because, you know, some people say, "Wow, that's really ambitious. Can these kids really get into college?" And sometimes that means they're just asking the question. "Wow, you say you're going to get all these kids into college, and nobody else in our city seems to be able to do that. Why do you think you can do it? What's your secret sauce?" Sometimes it's a good question.</p> <p>Sometimes I've been with people screening candidates when they ask that same question, "Do you really think these kids can go to college?" It's code for them thinking [inaudible] them saying they don't believe in the kids. And</p>	


<p>of course, the kids can do it. And so you really need to probe that.</p> <p>Or if you believe...your school model is a very, very progressive model, you need to probe whether they think it's okay for kids to call their teachers by their first name or if they're going to have a big problem with that, which is an example of a board member that this is a bad fit. I've also been with board members who just can't stand the silent hallways and the uniforms of very, kind of, traditional schools.</p> <p>So you need to probe somehow. I mean, if you feel uncomfortable asking if they have kids and all that stuff, you know, I think it's fine to just ask [the following:]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me about a, you know, what's a great school to you? ▪ Did you go to a great school? ▪ Have you been in a great school? ▪ What does great education look like? <p>You'll learn a lot about whether they're a fit—because they could be a great potential board member, just not a good board member for your particular mission and school.</p>	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>Thank you. And one question about this guilt-free card that came up. "How do you tailor that for a founding board or an incubation, sort of the Year 1, where boards are much more hands-on? Any thoughts on that?"</p>	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah; same thing. So, you know, they've got to be a governor; they've got to come to meetings and, ideally, a retreat. I think in a start-up board—again—I haven't worked with too many boards that don't need some kind of fundraising effort, so I think that's the same. I'm sure</p>	



there's ambassador roles. Maybe in the really early days, the board's rolling up their sleeves and actually helping recruit kids, and put up lawn signs, and stuff like that, too, so that might be there. But I think those four categories apply. The bullets might be slightly different but probably not too different. Yeah, good question.	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
[Do you have] any recommendations for folks in a situation where their district requires the majority of [the] board be parents, given your comments about the role of parents on boards and other stakeholders on the board, and just suggestions for managing that type of board, or possibly suggestions on how to recruit parents or train parents in that situation?	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah; that's great. That's a good question because I understand there are plenty of places that are like that. I would still try and focus on skills because the point of the board is to help run a multimillion-dollar business. I still think the skills apply, so I would try and recruit parents based on the skill sets, and I would also really spell out in the job description that they are there to govern and not to manage. They have lots of special, you know, they need to take off their parent hats and put on the board hat, basically, and think big picture and long term. If they have specific management-level issues, like pick up and drop off, or the school lunch, or gym uniforms—those aren't the things the board is going to talk about. They should talk about those as a parent with the principal or the classroom teacher. I think if your board needs to be primarily [or] is mandated to be primarily parents or is, I think you should do some extra governance and management training to help people understand the difference of the role. But I would try and make it skill based.</p> <p>If you aren't mandated to have parents on the board but for some reason you do want to have some representation, the model that seems to work the best is if</p>	

<p>you have a parent group—a PTO [parent-teacher organization] or some kind of parent advisory council—that the elected chair or chair and vice chair of that group have the seats on the board, so at least they are—you know—they’ve been elected by the parents to be their representatives, and that model seems to work pretty well.</p>	
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p>	
<p>Great. Marci, if there are particular questions from the registration questions that you wanted to address, that would be great.</p>	
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Sure. Yeah. I think the first bullet here, “What are the most important capabilities of board members?” I think we talked about that, but I think this is a good question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should you look for well-rounded board members or board members who are experts in varied fields? ▪ Is there a role for board members who are not financial resources but are subject-area experts? <p>I definitely think that team—you want the team to bring those diverse skills there.</p> <p>I think that ideally...I think there was another question someone submitted about fundraising. Most schools need to do some private fundraising, but I don’t think squeezing your board members is the right way to go. I think board members need to roll up their sleeves and help, but the help could be writing a check; the help could be cultivating people; the help could be getting auction items donated—all kind of ways. I would think that you want well-rounded board members who have some previous governance experience and bring a very targeted skill that the board needs.</p> <p>The second bullet here, which is the transition from an interim board to a sustainable governing board, is a good question and in particular what to do with a dead weight</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 764 1078 793"></div> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are the most important capabilities of board members? Should you look for well-rounded board members, or members who are experts in varied fields? Is there a role for board members who are not financial resources, but are subject area experts? ▶ Please address the transition from an interim board (founding board of a charter school - those who made it happen) to the governing board; in particular what to do with dead weight interim board members and how to politely move them along? ▶ What advice you would give people who are newly forming a board or organization? ▶ Could we discuss the role of parents from the school on the board? Also, issues around having a PTO liaison attend board meetings or sit on the board? Our school is struggling with a PTO who wants a voting role on the board. <hr/> <p>Slide 46</p>

<p>in term board members and how to politely move them along.</p> <p>I think there's a problem still across the country where people put a founding board together, which isn't necessarily going to be the board that governs long term, and so you really want to the extent possible to have your founding board be the board that you think is going to go the distance. But I think there's this natural point where people get chartered between chartering and doors open, that it's fine to say, "Now we need to really build a sustainable governing board and come up with that very specific job description and performance expectations," and give people a chance if they can't meet those to politely tell them it's time to thank them for their service. Maybe they could step down and serve on a committee or something like that.</p> <p>I think I answered the parent liaison question on the bottom there.</p> <p>Other questions, Tammie?</p>	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>Yeah. There's just a question about having parents and teachers on the board and what to do when you get into those conversations that are brought to the board, [like] school-level conversations that have been brought to the board, where it may be necessary for the parent or [the] teacher to recuse themselves if it relates to leadership issues, or concerns, or parent escalations of a particular topic. [Do] you have any suggestions on how to handle those sticky conversations?</p>	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah. I mean, I think the more you can be explicit up front. Often, people don't think about this, and then the heated incident happens. You're going to go in a closed session and at the 11th hour, the board members look around and say," Uh-oh; we can't have a teacher in here, or we can't</p>	

<p>have the parent,” and they feel a little bit dissed. They got kicked out, basically.</p> <p>I think if you’re required to have teachers and parents on the board, I think you just need to spell out and have a special job description for parents and teachers and say that—you know—occasionally a situation may arise that you’re going to need to recuse. You know you could spell out what the big categories are.</p> <p>This is exactly why if you don’t have to, I just really think it’s cleaner not to have parents and teachers on the board because inevitably you are going to have these situations a few times a year, where they need to recuse themselves or step out, and it just sets up, like, a different class of trustee, and I just think it sets up a funky dynamic.</p>	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>One other question around the guilt-free card again. “Is it expected for each board member to play off of roles or the idea that the different board members play different roles?”</p>	
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah; I think. From my experience, when I look at the boards that I work with that are highly effective, one of the key ingredients that’s making them highly effective is that the majority of [the] board members are doing all four of those things almost all the time. It’s not like some people are helping with fundraising, and some people are helping with the ambassador role, and some people are doing consulting roles. It’s that they’re all doing a little bit of all those things all the time as a group. If you had, you know, seven people, or nine people, or 11 people all rowing in the same direction, everybody doing a little bit of ambassador work, a little bit of fundraising, you just get a lot more traction through that. Ideally, you’d have everybody doing that. Some people are going to be more comfortable doing certain parts of that than others. Some people need more training than others. But, yeah, that’s the intent of that. Good question.</p>	

<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p> <p>I think you could take the question that you put up about the relationship between the director and [the] parent organization.</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 247 1421 514">  <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Besides firing a talented, experienced and valued director, what does a board do when the director 'allies' with the parent organization to publicly and privately critique the board frequently? Should the board require that all board members contribute money to the charter school, or set a minimum contribution? How do boards find/recruit chairs that have the time and skills to lead a board from mediocre to great, particularly when the school leader is not fully invested in governance? Please address challenges of recruiting board members from the community that are not parents, staff, or teachers. What is the ideal board term and how do you keep your board empowered/knowledgeable with expiring board terms? <p><small>© The High Bar 2015. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. www.thehighbar.com • 2025, 715.682 • hbar@thehighbar.com</small></p> </div> <p>Slide 47</p>
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p> <p>Yeah. I keep looking at all the questions being submitted, so maybe I'll ask this one: "Besides firing a talented, experienced, and valued director, what does a board do when the director allies with the parent organization and publicly and privately critiques the board frequently?" [The] big picture is [as follows]: The High Bar philosophy is that you're trying to build a partnership between the board and the CEO. And, ultimately, the board does hire and fire your leader, but it really should feel like a partnership. And, unfortunately, they often...it's set up to hierarchical, and it becomes an "us versus them." And so I think this is a case where it's interesting. Whoever submitted this said they were talented, experienced, and valued. You know, I think if they're undercutting the authority of the board, then they're not very talented, and they're not very experienced, and they shouldn't be valued too much. I think this is pulling the director aside and saying, "We can't have a three-way conversation here." I mean, hearing from the stakeholders is the director's responsibility, and that's a big part of their job to be an ally with the board and not to critique them. I would take serious action if they can't follow through with that.</p>	

TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>I think one quick question and then one a little bit longer, and that might be our last questions we can get to. But if you can talk to maybe some situations that you've seen where a parent board member may need to recuse themselves.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 48</p>
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Sure. I guess a recent one I saw was a parent was on the board, and there was a serious issue/accusation about a teacher in the school, and that parent's child was in that classroom. They had just a lot of personal information; they're way too close to be objective. I mean one could say, oh, they have valuable experience because they were a parent of a kid in that class this year, and they probably knew stuff. But I think that what's important, like, for the investigation that was happening there, I think that parent shouldn't have been there. The board was deciding... there's this big accusation. What do we need to do legally? What's the legal process we need to work with the police and execute this thing? I think the parent was just too emotional and too connected to it. Does that make sense?</p>	
TAMMIE KNIGHTS:	
<p>Yep. And another question was, "How do you communicate board giving expectations? Are there different expectations for different members?"</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 49</p>
MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:	
<p>Yeah. That's a great question. No. I'm not in a...I think that everybody on your board should be treated equally, and I don't believe that there are some worker bees, and there are some people who just write some big checks. I think there should be an expectation for everybody. [inaudible]</p>	

<p>What I like is that these are public schools, so I do see some schools that have a minimum give/get, which I don't like at all. These are public schools; this is not an art museum or a symphony or you know some other kind of charity. This is a school for everybody, and I don't think you should have to be capable of writing a big check to serve on the board.</p> <p>I do like that the board has a philosophical conversation about fundraising, and if the board needs to fundraise, then everybody needs to help. I like this term the best: Everybody gives a stretch gift of best of personal ability. So, for somebody a stretch gift may be \$200.00 and for somebody else on the board it may be \$2,000.00 and that that information is all private. Usually, if you have a development director on staff, they can work with the board, or the board chair, or the chair of the development committee, so just one person has that information. And you might report out collectively we're going to raise, as a board, \$10,000.00, and then you can say report on [the] percentage of people who have made their stretch gift, so you don't tell individually how much everybody gave, but you're reporting the board's total goal.</p>	
<p>TAMMIE KNIGHTS:</p>	
<p>Great. Well, it's 3:01, so I definitely want to thank Marci for spending the last hour sharing her expertise about board members, and recruiting them, and finding them, and selecting them. So, thank you, Marci.</p> <p>And I want to thank all of our participants for joining us today and asking such great questions. We hope that you found this webinar useful, and you can take it back to your schools or your boards. As Marci said, you can find this presentation immediately at the website she listed on the page, or it's in the chat.</p>	

<p>And we will be posting the webinar on the Charter School Resource Center by mid next week. We have a brief survey for you to complete to make sure that we continue to provide quality and the most pertinent information to the field, so if you could just stay on for a brief moment while I the meeting and complete that survey. Thank you and have a great day.</p>	<div data-bbox="1052 199 1409 466"> <p>Thank you for participating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about future webinars in the ELL series hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center: http://registration.airprojects.org/NCSRCELL/register.aspx • This webinar will be archived at the following website: http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/ • Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation. </div> <p>Slide 50</p>
<p>MARCI CORNELL-FEIST:</p>	
<p>Thanks, Tammie.</p>	
	<div data-bbox="1052 609 1409 875"> <p>National Charter School Resource Center <small>an American Institute for Research</small></p> <hr/> <p>National Charter School Resource Center 1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW Washington, DC 20007-3835 Phone: 877-277-2744 Website: www.charterschoolcenter.org E-Mail: charterschoolcenter@air.org</p> </div> <p>Slide 51</p>